

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Previously presented) A production method for processed soybean food products comprising the steps of:

(A) grinding raw soybeans to produce a soybean slurry;

(B) heating the soybean slurry so that the soybean slurry is thermally denatured, wherein

in the heating step (B), the soybean slurry is flowed alternately between a large diameter pipe arranged in a straight line and a small diameter pipe bent in a turning configuration, and

(C) partway through the heating step (B), deaerating the soybean slurry for removing air bubbles mixed in with the soybean slurry.

2. (Original) The production method for processed soybean food products according to claim 1, wherein the heating step (B) and the deaeration step (C) are performed continuously.

3. (Previously presented) The production method for processed soybean food products according to claim 1, wherein the heating step (B) comprises a first heating step in which a temperature of the soybean slurry is raised to a predetermined intermediate temperature and a second heating step in which the soybean slurry is further heated, and wherein the deaeration step (C) is performed between the first heating step and the second heating step.

4. (Previously presented) The production method for processed soybean food products according to claim 1, wherein the deaeration step (C) is performed at the point when the soybean slurry reaches a temperature range of from about 75 to about 125°C in the heating step (B).

5. (Previously presented) The production method for processed soybean food products according to claim 1, wherein the deaeration step (C) is performed at the point when the soybean slurry reaches a temperature range of from about 75 to about 100°C in the heating step (B).

6. (Previously presented) The production method for processed soybean food products according to claim 1, wherein in the deaeration step (C) for removing air bubbles the soybean slurry is depressurized such that the temperature of the soybean slurry decreases by at least about 3°C or more.

7. & 8. Cancelled.

9. (Previously presented) The production method for processed soybean food products according to claim 1, wherein, in the small diameter pipe that is bent in a turning configuration, the soybean slurry is heated by steam being blown into the soybean slurry.

10.-15. Cancelled.

16. (New) The production method for processed soybean food products according to claim 1, wherein the heating step (B) the soybean slurry is heated by blowing steam into the soybean slurry from a steam outlet provided at the distal end of a steam pipe protruding into the inside of the small diameter pipe bent in a turning configuration.

17. (New) The production method for processed soybean food products according to claim 1, wherein the heating step (B) the soybean slurry is heated by blowing steam into the soybean slurry from a steam outlet that opens facing the direction in which the soybean slurry is circulating and that is provided at the distal end of a steam pipe protruding into the inside of the small diameter pipe bent in a turning configuration.

18. (New) The production method for processed soybean food products according to claim 1, wherein the diameter of the small diameter pipe bent in a turning configuration is within a range from $\frac{3}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{5}$ of the large diameter pipe arranged in a straight line.